

Digital Dakota Network (DDN) Video Operations/Policy Manual



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Digital Dakota Network (DDN) Video Operations/Policy Manual

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SECTION A

DDN SYSTEM INFORMATION

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of policy manual.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the administration, use, operations, and scheduling procedures regarding the video conferencing portion of the Dakota Digital Network (DDN). Policies governing the use of DDN For-Fee sites (former RDT Network sites) are covered by a separate attachment pertaining to the use of these locations.

Policy changes and interpretation.

DECA and DDN Video administrative staff may change this policy as needed and will provide final authority in the interpretation of the policy. The text of the policy will be periodically reviewed by the DECA to assure continued applicability as the project grows and matures.

What Is The Digital Dakota Network?

The Digital Dakota Network (DDN) is a state-supported digital communication system that delivers high-speed data connectivity to all public schools in South Dakota. In addition, the DDN Video delivers high-quality video conferencing capabilities to high/middle school facilities within South Dakota. This system, created by Gov. William Janklow, is a cooperative effort between the state of South Dakota and private corporate contributions.

The objectives of the DDN Video are to provide a seamless statewide **educational delivery system**. Benefits of using the DDN Video include sharing educational resources; broadening course offerings; allowing teacher collaboration; saving time, travel and other resources; and removing geographic barriers.

The DDN video equipment is intended for use in K-12 education. Whether being used for the receipt or delivery of distance learning classes, or as a multimedia instructional tool for on-site classes, each school district will retain local control of the use and scheduling of their DDN Video classroom. This means the school district will determine what classes and programs they will participate in. There may be opportunities via the DDN Video for evening staff development and community educational programs, but this will also require the district to provide access to their facilities for these programs. School districts will not be required to provide after-hours access but are encouraged to make available to their community the potential educational opportunities offered by this network.

How Does It Work?

Each school district has been provided a group video conferencing system (VTEL LC5000) or DDN Video connections have been made to compatible video conferencing equipment already in place at the school. The technology uses video CODECs (Coder/Decoder) and digital compression to provide fully interactive (two-way) videoconference services utilizing a portion of the bandwidth capacity on the Digital Dakota Network (DDN).

Videoconference rooms are connected either in a point-to-point (one site to one site) conference or a multi-point conference by network control equipment located in Pierre or Mitchell. The DDN Video can link all sites into a single conference, or several combinations of sites into separate simultaneous conferences. For example, nine point-to-point conferences could be conducted at the same time several multi-point conferences were happening.

A central scheduling and control system is used to connect sites and schedule conferences. Users will submit schedule requests to a central scheduling site through a web based system, via fax or telephone. Sites are only connected to the specified sites during the time scheduled. At the completion of the scheduled time, a session will end and all conference sites will be disconnected.

2. NETWORK ACCESS

The priority use is for K-12 public education. K-12 public schools and Technical Institutes will have connections within the DDN Video at no charge for educational activities directed toward K-12 students, staff, or parents. Those not affiliated with the DDN Video may have access to the DDN Video on a fee-based usage. (See Section B Item 5 “Other Users of DDN”)

3. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

South Dakota Department of Education & Cultural Affairs (DECA)

DECA’s primary role, regarding the video component of the DDN Video, is to provide staff development, training, and assistance for public K-12 school districts to make effective educational use of the system. This includes:

- Conducting programs for teachers to effectively use distance learning technology.
- Providing staff assistance to public K-12 educators using the DDN Video.
- Providing information regarding K-12 DDN Video class offerings. This is available via the “Online Distance Learning Clearinghouse” ddnvideo.com
- Assisting schools with the development of distance learning instructional policies.
- Serving as the content manager of K-12 programming.

Digital Dakota Network Staff

Digital Dakota Network (DDN) includes a network administrator, technical and operations staff.

The network administrator supervises the overall functions of Digital Dakota Network (DDN).

The DDN Video has combined some of the State’s finest resources available to provide a competent and experienced staff for the operation of the network. Day-to-day operations of the

DDN Video will be the joint responsibility of the Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI) and the State of South Dakota.

Technical Staff

MTI and the Bureau of Information and Telecommunications will employ technicians trained and certified in all aspects of compressed digital video. Offices will be maintained in Mitchell and Pierre to provide a timely response to problems encountered in the use of the network. This technical staff will be the first line assistance to schools operating as part of the DDN Video.

Operations Staff

The staff provides policy implementation, centralized scheduling, billing, and reporting functions as for operation of the DDN Video. This group of trained professionals will assist schools in maximizing the impact of this valuable new tool for education.

School District

Each school district has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding between the district and the South Dakota Department of Education & Cultural Affairs (DECA) to define the responsibilities of DECA and the District on the installation, use, and maintenance of the video component of Connecting the Schools. In addition each school district will:

- Determine community public access for use of the room after priority educational times.
- Designate a site coordinator for each DDN video room location. (see responsibilities listed below)
- Provide site coordinator contact and classroom capacity information to DDN Video.
- If originating distance learning classes, the district will provide course/event requirements to receiving schools.
- If receiving distance learning classes, the district will follow the course/event requirements of the originating school.
- If sending or receiving distance learning classes, the district agrees to comply with data gathering requests from DECA.

Site Coordinator

These individuals are the front-line contacts for DDN Video users. They are designated by each school to be accountable for the site's operations. Site coordinator responsibilities include:

- Serve as liaison between users, DDN Video Network staff, and other sites.
- Arrange for and provide logistical assistance for participants, including receiving advance materials from videoconference organizers, placing it in classrooms, and returning literature to videoconference organizers (providing a stamped, self-addressed envelope is supplied by the organizer).
- Provide operational support for the classroom.
- Monitor classroom facilities when in operation and report all technical problems according to the reporting procedure within 24 hours.
- Assist with remote testing and troubleshooting of DDN Video equipment in coordination with DDN Video technical staff.

- For each videoconference scheduled, the site coordinator will assure that the classroom is accessible and in working order.
- Provide instructions on how to contact the site coordinator during regular business hours, and post a current list of support personnel and telephone numbers in the classroom and inform participants about problem reporting procedures and phone location.
- Provide equipment training to local users, faculty and staff.
- Ensure that local site rules are adhered to.

3. HOW TO CONTACT PEOPLE

Site Coordinators

Site coordinator contact information will be posted on the DDN web site at ddnvideo.com. This site includes a contact list for each DDN video site.

Technical and Operations Staff

Digital Dakota Network (DDN) Video staff can be reached for normal business and scheduling assistance from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CT Monday through Friday by calling **1-888-356-2030** . Electronic submissions are possible via the ddnvideo.com home page.

A trouble line has been established to assist with any problem users may encounter with the electronic classroom. Trained personnel will be available during scheduled conference times by calling 1-800-567-8345.

5. ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Time Zones

South Dakota is divided into two time zones. All scheduling is done in Central Time. The appropriate time zone should always be indicated on registration and marketing materials.

Guidelines For Number Of Sites And Participants

As with any face-to-face meeting, the more participants involved, the less chance each has to interact. Likewise, it is often harder to hear the presenter in large meetings due to ambient noise in the room. Such environmental noise impacts audio on the Network in much the same way. Fewer sites and participants can increase interaction and reduce distractions. However, if less interaction is required, specific periods are set aside for interaction, or when the network's audio mute (privacy) function is used properly, the quality of interaction increases for larger video conferences. When any class size grows to a point of concern it is suggested that each receiving site make local classroom facilitators available for monitoring and student assistance.

DDN Video Classroom Capacity

Videoconferences must not exceed the listed studio capacities. Under special circumstances overflow or other seating arrangements may be possible on a per-site basis. Contact the local site coordinators for seating capacity.

Advance Material Mailing/Faxing Coordination

If materials of any type need to be mailed, faxed, or electronically transferred to a site prior to a class, it must be pre-arranged between the sending teacher/presenter and site coordinator. Requirements and procedures regarding these types of materials for K-12 classes should be dictated in the course syllabi or instructional policies of the sending school.

Security

While the DDN Video does not offer encryption or "scrambling" capability, there are several security provisions inherent in the system. The DDN is a digital closed circuit interactive communications network. Sound and picture are converted into a digital stream immediately by the computer system located your local site. The journey of this digital stream takes it through many of the state's telephone companies to the DDN hub locations in Mitchell or Pierre. The hub locations use several powerful computing systems to combine this data into groups that have been pre-designated by yet another group of scheduling computers. The combined data is then shared among an assigned group. The video conferencing equipment at your site is then capable of receiving and decoding the digital signal into sound and picture. Unlike standard computer network systems, these data signals cannot be split or tapped. Any attempt to intercept or decode that digital stream between intended sites would alarm the system and destroy the content. Conference security cannot be compromised at any location between the originating and receiving site.

The DDN staff monitors the activity of the network through computer driven menus that show only the status of the connection. No hub location has the ability to actually see or hear the conference.

The signals can be intercepted at the local sites after they are decoded. Some locations may tap off picture and sound to allow for distribution to multiple rooms or the Principal's office for student monitoring. Sites using these monitoring systems are very rare and those concerns must be addressed at local levels. Ask the local site if that system is in place if you have security concerns.

It is *technically* possible to add an additional site to a conference without your knowledge. That practice would be a violation of your trust and the professional ethics of the DDN staff. **The DDN will not schedule an additional site(s) to observe or monitor a conference without permission from the originating site.**

SECTION B

DDN SCHEDULE PROCEDURES

1. Master Schedule

Remote Access To DDN Schedule (Availability Late May 2000)

The master schedule is maintained by DDN Video central scheduling. However, the network scheduling system is web-based and may be accessed for review and requests submitted at ddnnet.net. Remote users may browse the database for available times as well as other read-only functions. Email or fax notification will be made to site coordinators when their site has been scheduled for a class or program.

Event Start and Stop Times

The Digital Dakota Network schedules in 10-minute increments. Conferences will begin or end on the hour or at :10,:20,:30 :40,:50 minutes after the hour. Conferences are scheduled for whatever length of time needed (i.e. 50 minutes, 70 minutes, 90 minutes).

Hours of Operation

The DDN Video Network hours of operation have been set from 7AM to 10PM. CT Monday through Saturday. All requests to begin at times that do not fall into the regular school day require site approval. Requests for network use outside of the hours of operation will be considered pending approval from the DDN Network Administrator.

Scheduling on Traditional Holidays

The DDN video technical support will be closed on the following traditional holidays, with actual days of observance dictated by State of South Dakota guidelines.

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas

Scheduling on Non-traditional Holidays

The DDN video technical support will be open for educational events on the following non-traditional holidays. We will be closed for non-educational users on these holidays.

- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Native American Day
- Veteran's Day

Inclement weather closure

If adverse weather causes an educational facility to close then the DDN Video classroom at that site is considered closed. It is the responsibility of the site that hosts program origination to contact DDN video operations and advise of the closing.

2. Event Priorities

Intent of Priority Status

The purpose of designating priority use of the network is to allow the fullest access possible to public education. The time periods set below are not meant to be exclusive of other non-education events but rather to indicate the possibility of preemption during time periods set aside for student, staff, and parental programming. Other events may be scheduled during times set aside for specific activities, but, do so with the understanding these events may be interrupted or canceled by educational activities at the discretion of local school district administration.

Designation of time priorities

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. central time

Administrative conferences for education and government.

8:00 – 3:00 p.m. central time

Programming delivered to K-12 students and staff, originating from K-12 schools or other educational institutions/entities.

3:00 – 5:00 p.m. central time

Administrative conferences for education and government.

5:00 – 10:00 p.m. central time

This period is open to all users. Although K-12 education continues to be the highest priority, lifetime learning opportunities, career enhancement seminars, and business and industry training are considered vital to the State's economic development efforts. Those events can occur during this time period based on site approval and availability. See Section B Item 5 "Other Users". A per site per hour fee will apply to non-educational users during all hours of operation

Preemption By Governor

The Governor is authorized to preempt scheduled events as well as schedule outside of the regular hours of operation, i.e. Sundays and holidays. Such authority would be exercised in critical times such as tragedies or acts of God that significantly impact the entire state.

3. Scheduling Procedures

Events may be submitted to DDN Video scheduling by three methods:

- **Electronic Submissions (Preferred Method)**

A request form may be submitted on-line at ddnnet.net. This is the preferred method of scheduling. A confirmation of the request will be returned via email to the sender within 24 hours.

- **Faxed Submission**

A fax line has been designated for scheduling requests on the DDN. The form may be printed from the DDN website. Submit the completed fax request to (605) 773-6581. A receipt confirmation of the request will be returned via email to the site coordinator within 24 hours.

- **Telephone submission**

It is recommended that voice submissions be used only when short timelines are necessary and the program is a single event (see ad-hoc and last minute scheduling). Immediate confirmation and scheduling can be obtained by voice submissions.

There are three scheduling processes used by DDN Video users to submit requests. Following is a general discussion of each of the processes. Detailed instructions will be available at ddnnet.net.

Educational Advance Scheduling

This process is for educational users to schedule DDN video sessions for upcoming semesters. Typically, sessions scheduled during this process are for semester or yearlong courses. Deadlines for advance scheduling begin approximately 4 months before a semester and are listed below. Additionally, educational users will have priority to schedule video sessions for events occurring between 60 – 120 days out.

Scheduling deadlines for each semester

Fall Semester and year-long classes May 15th
Spring Semester September 15th
Summer Semester March 15th

First Come – First Served Scheduling

This scheduling process is used for scheduling events no more than 60 days in advance. Time of receipt of the scheduling request is the priority during this process. Non-educational users will be limited to using this scheduling process for DDN Video sites.

Ad-Hoc or Last Minute Scheduling

DDN video sites may be scheduled at the last minute via telephone. The Ad-hoc/last minute scheduling process is used for new requests or modifications to a session scheduled to occur in less than 48 hours, not including Saturday or Sunday. The user is required to call all sites to verify site availability and alert the site coordinator that an Ad-Hoc/last minute request is in the process. The request is not submitted through the DDN video scheduling web site. Instead, **the user makes the request by calling the DDN Central Scheduling at 1-888-356-2030** and providing the information from the Ad-Hoc/Last Minute Scheduling Checklist (see Attachment 3). For requests within 48 hours, not including Saturday or Sunday, DDN Video sites have the right to accept or reject the request.

4. Local Site Fees

Billing Of Site Fees – Administrative Rule

This fee shall be set by local policy and be what is considered usual and customary. Billing and payment will occur directly between the school and the user. It is not the intent of the State of South Dakota to use the DDN as an income-generating device for schools. School may not charge equipment fees to DDN users as local school districts have no dollars to recover in the equipment or system upkeep. It is strongly recommended that school districts share with their communities the opportunities available through the Digital Dakota Network by adhering to the following recommendations:

1. Consider a charge to DDN users only when extra school personal are brought in outside of normal coverage hours.
2. Room charges, if any, should be nominal to cover costs.

The State has made a tremendous investment in distance learning technology for the entire educational community in South Dakota. We must all (K-12, Technical Education, and the University System) work together to maximize its impact and realize it's potential.

5. Other Users of DDN

The State of South Dakota recognizes the contribution that is made to our educational system by many outside of the K-12 public education world. The funding required for the operation of the DDN Video is allocated each year by the legislature. These are tax dollars are set-aside for K-12 public education in our State. Because of the nature of these funds, non-public educational users of the system must contribute to the support and operation of the Network

South Dakota University System

Offering students a head start on their college career and the opportunity for adults to obtain an advanced degree without leaving their hometown are greatly desired options brought to communities by the DDN Video. Toward this end, the DDN Video has entered into an agreement with State Universities that allows access to the Network for educational purposes with an annual fee for the service. This use is restricted to interactive videoconferencing. Access will be accomplished through the DDN Video Classroom (formerly the RDT Network studio) or the Governor's Electronic Classrooms located at each of the State Universities. The former RDT Network facilities located on the campus of State Universities will continue to be scheduled for usage through the DDN master scheduling system.

Private and Tribal Higher Education Systems

South Dakota's private and tribal post-secondary facilities will have access to the DDN Video via ISDN and RDT Network facilities. A per hour fee for service or an annual network management contract will be necessary for these non-public facilities. Direct connections to the

DDN Video via fixed or full time network infrastructure is possible under special provisions. These provisions would require systems engineering plans that meet the state videoconferencing standards and infrastructure to a DDN Video hub location. All requests for this type of service would be reviewed on a case by case basis.

South Dakota Technical Institutes

As part of DECA, the State's Technical Institutes will operated under the public school policies. The former RDT Network facilities located at the Technical Institutes will continue to be scheduled for usage through the DDN master scheduling system. These studios will continue to be operated by the State of South Dakota and are subject to the policies that govern the operations of the former RDT Network.

Private, Tribal, Home, and Parochial Schools

The State of South Dakota realizes that public education is not the only type of school system in operation and that those other school environments may benefit from the advantages and opportunities brought by the DDN. Other non-public schools in South Dakota operating independent distance learning systems may have access to the DDN Video under special provisions. These provisions would require systems engineering plans that meet the state videoconferencing standards and infrastructure to a DDN Video hub location. Additionally, annual network management fees or an hourly access fee would apply. Decisions regarding access to the DDN will be determined on a case by case basis.

Government

This network is designed and intended for use by public school districts, however, government operations of the State of South Dakota may be conducted on the DDN Video. State government will be allowed to conduct business and administrative conferences on the network during special times set aside by the network administrator outside of regular class time. An hourly access fee will apply to these conferences. Emergency operation of the DDN Video will provide unrestricted access to the executive branch of government at the demand of the Governor or appropriate government official. (See "Preemption by Governor" Section B Item 2)

Business and Industry

The DDN provides some locations in the State that serve as the primary business and industry video network in South Dakota. These sites are located throughout the State and are available for booking at all times. Site locations and rates are available by calling (605) 773-3333 or from the web at state.sd.us/bit/tele/rdt/rdt.htm. Business and industry may use the DDN Video Network during the non-educational use time (5:00 – 10:00 p.m.). This use is subject to site availability and approval.

For-Profit Educational Programming

For-profit entities must receive approval from the Department of Education and Cultural Affairs prior to offering educational programming during the 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. time period. This can be accomplished by contacting the DECA Office of Technology at (605) 773-6118.

Not-for-Profit DDN Use and Fee Waiver

Not-for-profit entities can seek a fee waiver from DECA for programming they are providing via the DDN. The programming must be free to the participants and be educational or community development/betterment in nature. The not-for-profit entity remains responsible for any local fees assessed by the local DDN site per their site usage policy. To seek this waiver, contact the DECA Office of Technology at (605) 773-6118.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Ad-Hoc Scheduling Checklist
2. Rate Card for Non-Educational Use

Attachment 1

DDN Ad-Hoc Scheduling Checklist

The Ad-Hoc scheduling process is used for new requests or modifications to a session scheduled to occur in less than 48 hours, not including Saturday or Sunday.

Contact the DDN Central Scheduling at 888-356-2030

The DDN Scheduling staff will request the following information:

1. Name:
2. Phone number:
3. DDN Reservation number if modifying an existing request:
4. Name of session:
5. Session date:
6. Start Time:
7. End Time:
8. Anticipated number of participants:
9. Origination site:
10. Remote sites(s)
11. Have you checked for site availability?
12. Who did you talk to at each site?

For Ad-Hoc scheduling requests, the requester **MUST** call each site to notify the site coordinator about the last minute request and to check that no other activity is scheduled in the site's DDN classroom.

NOTE: For requests within 48 hours, not including Saturday or Sunday, DDN sites have the right to accept or reject the request.

Attachment 2

Digital Dakota Network Rate Card Rate Chart (PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Two-way Interactive Conference

Non-Profit	Per Hour/Per Site	\$ 30.00
Business	Per Hour/Per Site	\$ 30.00

Interstate/Worldwide Video

Per Hour/Per Site \$105.00 Plus line Costs (Point to Point)

Technician Labor/Consulting

Per Hour \$ 42.00 Per Hour

Bridge Rental

Non-Profit	Per Hour/Per Site	\$30.00
Business	Per Hour/Per Site	\$30.00

If you would like further information please call the Dakota Digital Network in Pierre, South Dakota (605) 773-3333.

**Dakota Digital Network
500 E. Capitol Ave – Pierre, SD 57501
Phone (605) 773-3333 – Fax (605) 773-6581**